

# INTEGRITY

ENTS A COPY 1280 Old Mission Students' Theol.



July, 1948 Vol. 2, No. 10  
SUBJECT: Leisure and Recreation

# C O N T E N T S

HOW MODERN MAN BECAME MERRY.

By PETER MICHAELS - - - - -

MODERN DANCING AND CHRISTIANITY

By LEONARD AUSTIN - - - - -

THE LEAGUE OF ST. LINIMENT

By ED WILLOCK - - - - -

THE DATING SYSTEM

By DOROTHY X. DIX - - - - -

BROTHER, CAN YOU SPARE AN HOUR?

By JOHN HICKS - - - - -

THE ONLY CHILD (a poem)

By SEAN O'FEARGHAIL - - - - -

X MARKS THE SPOT (a poem)

By MARIE LAUK - - - - -

PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION (a poem)

By SR. ST. FRANCIS, S.S.J. - - - - -

SYMBOLS OF SIN

By JOHN GLENNON - - - - -

CHRISTIANITY AND THE PRESS DON'T MIX

By WALTON WILLIAMS - - - - -

BOOK REVIEWS - - - - -

INTEGRITY is published by lay Catholics and  
dedicated to the task of discovering the new  
synthesis of RELIGION and LIFE for our times.

**Vol. 2, No. 10**

**July 1946**

Published Monthly by Integrity Publishing Co., 1556 York Avenue New  
28 N. Y., Pl 9-8313. Edited by Edward Willock and Carol Jackson. E  
tered as Second Class Matter October 14, 1946 at the Post Office at  
New York, N. Y. Under the Act of March 3, 1897. All single  
copies 25 cents each; yearly subscriptions domestic \$3.00,  
Canadian \$3.50, Foreign \$4.00.



# How Modern Man Became Merry

**R**ETRACING briefly the history of modern man, we find that the Acquisitive Society was superseded by the Leisure State, which in turn gave way to the great Age of Penance just ended.

It was during the early acquisitive age that the institutions of society gradually were oriented to money-making as a final end, refashioned from the old Christian pattern to the service of mammon. Not everyone swung over to the love of money, but the leaders of society did, and they exercised part of personal monasticism in the pursuit of that end.

Since we are concerned here chiefly with recreation rather than economics, let us pause to examine the leisure-time activities of the acquisitive man. The outstanding characteristic was secularization. The life of that period was no more related to God than was the work. The holidays were patriotic and bank holidays, not saints' days. Men golfed solemnly, with an awareness of the physical benefits to be derived from play in the open air after a week at the office desk. They traveled much abroad during the intermittent periods of peace, for cultural and business reasons, engaging chiefly in sightseeing. They enjoyed the theatre, concerts, card playing, and what they used to call the "books of the month." This is the early acquisitive period, remember, when men still seemed able to hold to the good natural order, when it looked, though, having abandoned Christianity (except for occasional lip service), men could maintain a cultured pagan standard of life.

As the rich grew richer, but not happier, the poor were regimented increasingly, by the natural progress of an unnatural system of industrial mass production, into a propertyless, proletarian condition in which they were virtually robots. It is unlikely that the masses of the people, with their Christian heritage, could have been persuaded (as the leaders were) that money could buy happiness. But they did discover that in an industrial society money can buy quite a bit of oblivion. The more industrialized society became, so much the more intolerable it became for the masses of the people. The more intolerable it became, the more industrial production was diverted from physical necessities (such as housing, basic clothing, and food) to instruments of entertainment and diversion. Men slaved monotonously to make the television sets which would make their monotonous lives tolerable. They sold themselves into the chain gangs of the automobile plants so to earn enough money to buy an automobile. A sort of ratio perpetuated between the demands of a dehumanized population for escape and

the sacrifice of mind, will, energy and talents which went into making the latest escape device; the former always running a little ahead of the latter. Naturally the majority of men did not realize that they were busy tightening the noose around their own necks. They looked for a paradise of pleasure just beyond their reach. It was called the Leisure State.

The theory of the Leisure State was exactly the opposite of the Christian theory of life and work. "Man is born to labor as the eagle is to fly," one of the contemporary Popes said. The Leisure State denied this, contending instead that man is made to play and will be able to do so almost all the time as soon as science has made work unnecessary.

It never did come about, as the supporters of the Leisure State anticipated, that the work week was reduced to five or ten hours. Instead it hit a brief forty-hour low and then rose again until it reached a seven-day week. However, leisure as an ideal was certainly enthroned. The entertainment industry ran into the billions of dollars. Hippodromes, amphitheatres, sport gardens, stadiums, gymnasiums, playgrounds, racetracks, provided the setting for spectator, professionalized sports on a gigantic scale. Movies, radio and television were ubiquitous. Essential literature flooded the newsstands. Although the work week did not decrease but increased, the invention of labor-saving devices made it possible for men to divide their time between mechanical office or factory work and sedentary amusements. It freed women from what they had to call the "drudgery" of housework, so that they too could become part of the machinery in offices and factories. Then they too had to escape from their dehumanized existence into the temporary oblivion of drink or lust or the movie house.

As long as it could, by fair means or foul, the Leisure State refused to recognize its major problem, but in the end there came about a sustained national crisis. People were bored. Everyone was bored. No one could put the greatest mechanical wonder of science down in any man's home—say a machine by which he could pick up a chance conversation in the streets of Shanghai, or something that would transport a man to the Emperor's Palace in Tokyo in three minutes. Our good man would only yawn, or say, "Yeah, it's a nice color," or "What's this dial for?"

The government tried in every way to awaken people's interest in anything at all besides relaxation. There resulted a rash of things such as garden clubs ("Nature is the most fascinating thing on earth. Just wait until you have grown your own little radishes!"). But there were no takers, except for a few eccentrics who were so fascinated that they began to worship nature and developed a ritual cult of the wheat germ. Again the government tried interesting the citizens in "worthy books." Masterpieces of literature and philosophy beloved of other ages. No



majority were indifferent. A few intellectuals became sophists, and around trying to tell people how much they had studied of other le's ideas without having attained to any major convictions of their

The breakdown of the Leisure State came about through some olics who decided one day to take the Church seriously and literally. e had been a lot of talk about doing penance and it finally occurred ne of the faithful that that might mean him. He managed to d up a small group to consider the matter. Right off they saw the ulty. "If we stopped consuming so much, what would happen to system? . . . It doesn't so much matter about us, but suppose it be e a fad? . . . Suppose people lost their confidence in an ever-increas- standard of living?" But they decided to try it anyhow.

Following the theory (as they read in a spiritual book) that it is e humble to accept the penances God has sent one than to seek aordinary ones, they decided to accept their monotonous work as anance. "Forgive us, O Lord, for we have forsaken Thee and sought r money," they repeated in their hearts as they set the screws in the os or dropped the cookies into the designated places in the special y-assortment boxes. "Have pity on us, Christ, and make us men in," they chanted in unison, unheard by others over the din of the hines. "We offer our sufferings for the souls of this generation. . . . ept them, O Lord," prayed seven young women in a Coca-Cola eling plant, over the Musak in the background.

It naturally followed that the penitents abstained from the escapist s of their co-workers in the evening. "If our work is going to be anance, then we must face the reality of it and not try to deaden the n." They took to praying quite a bit at night and gathering in ll groups (their number was spreading) for mutual support and ouragement. The more penance they did, the more they became are of the need for penance. They began to see how wide was the f by which modern man had separated himself from God. They saw ls all around them in danger of everlasting fire.

"Let us fast for our fellow workers," they decided. So they did, iting themselves to dry bread, fresh fruit, hash and boiled potatoes. d then a funny thing happened. "Have you noticed," said one peni- t to another some weeks later, "how truly delicious are boiled po- ees?" "That's odd," said another, "I never liked hash in my life until w, and last night's meal was more delicious than ever I found the est taste sensation in my days of culinary delight. My meals have a t."

A similar thing occurred when the penitents started practicing stody of the eyes. All one Lent they went about with eyes cast down,

abstaining from video, window shopping, advertisement reading, even from viewing the budding trees, the floral displays in Radio the blue heavens by day or the starlit skies at night. "The single I saw on Easter Sunday," testified one, "filled my whole being with loveliness and the day with blissful joy."

So, too, with sound. Solitude and silence restored the power to appreciate delicate harmony (as opposed to the unmelodious imitations of factory noises of the latest symphonies and the maudlin sentimentality of popular crooning). Gregorian Chant for the first time had power to lift their hearts to holy things.

Delight shone increasingly on the faces of the penitents, whose numbers had now swollen to the proportions of a minor movement. Quite a number of people were being jarred out of their lethargy. "a new matter came up.

A middle-aged man spoke up at one of the weekly meetings of one of the original groups: I've been in this penitential movement ten years, fellow Christians. I offer up the monotony of my work for Christ, same as all of you. You will remember we started doing this in order to make a virtue of necessity. Do you realize that we have inadvertently destroyed the necessity of our own slavery? Since we can love automobiles, airplanes, television sets and three-inch steaks, we can live on very little. Must we continue to be robots or do you think God would be pleased to have us lead our fellowmen toward a more simple life, a more human work?"

That was the beginning of the end of industrialization as a part of society, and marked the death knell of the Leisure State. Penitence began to form in small Christian communities and started to work in crafts, farming, and apostolic ventures. As their common Christian life and creative work grew, so their joy increased and overflowed in simple songs and dances. Sunday was again observed and men came to celebrate the holy days instead of the secular holidays. Where formerly there had been a military parade as the focal point of the day's festivities, now there was a religious procession, not so martial but twice as colorful, and inviting the participation of the whole community. Not the parade ground, the town hall, or the local tavern, but the parish church and especially the Cathedral, became the center of social activity. Tourism gave way to pilgrimages which united men of all nations, not only in prayer and penance but also in an exchange of conversation, culture, in song, discussion and dance. People began to have fun in their families. Parents found new delight in their children. Laughter rang out in the streets. Through the death of mortification came a life of new joy.

That's how modern man became merry.

PETER MICHAEL



# Modern Dancing and Christianity

In an attempt to restore our recreational life to some basis of sanity we come face to face with a dual problem. On the one hand puritanism lays its heavy hand on our legitimate gaiety and exuberance at play alive in God's wonderful world. On the other hand paganism draws us blindly into her temple of pleasure, and bids us follow her on her excursions after new sensations, contemptuous of the innocent amusement of simple folk.

To the pagans, pleasure is the motive of existence and the substance of their dreams. They have built up their world of gilded joy and pleasure palaces, cocktail bars, have invaded the sports world and have made it increasingly difficult for modest people to enjoy their free time. In their ceaseless pursuit of that elusive phenomenon which they call happiness, they are willing to pay any price, will labor ever harder to obtain the money that will enable them to plunge deeper and deeper into the giddy stream of pleasure.

The puritans are much less bothered for they keep to their rigid discipline, fearing that contact with a generous smile and a quick pulse might shatter their walls of predestination. The ubiquitous pagans have slipped their way into our lives with bland assurance. Their positive assumption that their life of superficial intensity is an integral part of the "American way of life," that an economy built on more luxuries and unlimited leisure is the one to be shaped for the United States has led too many of our fellow-citizens. It is these bemused creatures who have set the standard over most of the world as to how we are to enjoy ourselves. The motion picture industry and the radio are almost exclusively in their hands and these industries are in turn supported by millions of passive individuals who, drained of any capacity to entertain themselves, pour huge sums into the coffers of the professional purveyors of joy. These neo-pagans have so influenced the lives of the masses that it is considered the "American way" to pay a fabulous price for tickets to the World Series or the Rose Bowl game and they have succeeded furthermore in convincing our youth that Saturday night is fun unless it is spent in a large dance hall or night club, listlessly swinging around the floor to the lascivious swing of a hot band. Any attempt to show these victims of the mass hoax that there is anything different and still fun, is the most difficult task facing those who are endeavoring to bring reason into the leisure time of the people.

In the Middle Ages, the great centuries of the Church, dances were intimately connected with the liturgy. Ceremonial dances and plays were performed in church before the very altar. Even in our

day, certain churches in Spain allow dances to be done within church, inside the sanctuary; and in other European countries, in America and even among our own Indians of the Southwest, dances of a ceremonial character are performed in the open space before the church edifice, immediately after Mass. In the Roman Ritual are prayers and litanies for all the great fundamental acts of life, the great cosmic procession of the world as marked by the liturgical calendar. These calendar feasts had their secular as well as their sacred observances. Both were intimately connected; each had its own particular rites and symbolic designs, but sprang from the same fundamental source: the honor and glory of God.

Associations of Christianity and dancing are by no means confined to the Mass. The very idea of dancing had a sacred and mystic meaning to the early Christians, who meditated profoundly on the text, "Ye have piped unto me, and ye have not danced." Origen prayed: "Let above all things there may be made operative in us the mystery 'as the stars dancing in heaven for the salvation of the universe.'" Saint Augustine described the angels dancing in heaven, and later the author of the *Dieta Salutis*, which is supposed to have influenced Dante in assigning so large a part to dancing in the *Paradiso*, described dancing as the occupation of the inmates of heaven, and Christ as the leader of the dance.

Puritanism crushed dancing in many parts of the world and marked the onset of a developing urbanism against the old ruralism. It made no distinction between good and evil, nor paused to consider what would come when dancing went. Remy de Gourmont remarks that the Puritans conquered the dance, and alcohol replaced the violin.

The complete separation of recreation from the organic life of a community, and from an integral part of the Christian way of life, began in the early nineteenth century when a reaction against puritanism stirred within the wealthy bourgeoisie. Not much over a hundred years ago the waltz mania swept the world. People had forgotten the old dances and communal celebrations of their fathers, or if they remembered them, despised them as the bucolic merry-makings of the peasants. The waltz captivated the newly-rich commercial classes, and was soon to be followed by ever more fads and fancies—the polka craze, the gavotte fad, the fascination with exotic and meaningless dances and rhythms. This has continued down to our own day with the latest craze for the rhumba, samba, and so on, *ad nauseam*.

Our great-grandfathers were really at fault. They allowed themselves to be deceived by the disintegrating forces at work in the world in their lighter moments as well as in their serious hours of work and worship. They followed each dance fad with renewed intensity. Many of our parents look with distaste upon the capers of their young and speak



good old days" of the waltz. If the norm of recreation is to be "Christian?" then many of the leisure-time activities of our parents would come under scrutiny. The waltz was the choreographic expression of the "Age of Reason and Enlightenment," and was, in its way, as dangerous as any of the modern forms. No dance could be so intoxicating, as emotionally upsetting as a good old-fashioned waltz, played at the breathless speed so beloved of our grandparents. These members of the older generation sigh for the return of the waltz and completely ignore the infinitely more beautiful and symbolic peasant dances of their ancestors.

The waltz had an added danger in its sentimentality. Sentimentality is the unique phenomenon of our time, and a dangerous one. It tends to upset the individual's emotional stability, even whole masses. A distinguished German scientist announced a few years ago that it was his people's devotion to the "Trinity of Sentimentality," Wagner, films and the waltz, that left them emotionally unstable and thus prey for the crude buffetings of militarists and the savage creed of the psychopathic paper-hanger.

The sentimental era has reached America. Will it, too, be a prelude to militarism, regimentation and cruelty? The current fad of "sweet" music is sentimentality at its basest. Swing music, although emotionally disturbing, at least has vitality and spirit. Divorced from the accompanying jungle rhythms of the swing band, the "jitter-bug" is a folk dance, expressive of the time it spanned—nervous, vulgar, self-conscious. Swing could be done with restraint and even coldly. The criticisms aimed now at swing and "jitter-bug" are rather empty, this febrile exhibition of the leisure moments of a people at war is now passing from the scene. But what will take its place? Something worse? The sticky harmonies of "sweet" music are the cries of a people confused, disillusioned and the sluggish steps that pace the listless beat is the step of a people bored, insecure and inhibited.

Are there any dances suitable for Christians? We need only to turn to our own rich recreational heritage: the ceremonial, communal dance-dramas of our own Catholic culture, the dances that are inherent in the forms fabricated by our own Catholic ancestors; the delightful, simple, and very often incredibly beautiful celebrations of the important periods of life; of weddings and baptisms, of saints' days, of the change of seasons, of the occupations. Among primitive peoples to dance was to pray. It is still so among many races in Africa, Asia, and among the aborigines of North and South America. Dancing is the primitive expression alike of religion and love, and is intimately connected with the human tradition of war, labor, pleasure and education. Modern man is the inheritor of a thousand years of Christian culture, he is a

creature made to the image and likeness of God, heir to the kingdom of Heaven. Can't we find better vehicles of emotional expression than immoral rhythms, formless dances, realistic drama?

The vexing problem of dancing, of all recreation, needs to be examined under the microscopic sights of the perennial philosophy. Enthusiasts for a return to the "old" must be wary that they do not become confused in their search for Christian entertainment. Ballroom dances can be clumsy, inartistic, vulgar. And so it is reasonable to assume that many ball-room dances of a more recent date may be decent and dignified. With an inexhaustible store of rich choreographic treasure bequeathed us by our Catholic ancestors, there is no need for us to hesitate over the question whether it is better to dance a waltz or a fox-trot, or whether it is really wrong to "cut a rug." Applying the basic Christian rules of the good, the true and the beautiful to the dance as we apply them to literature, painting and the drama, orders the necessity of investigation.

In an individualistic culture such as ours whatever has been handed down is a "superstition," not merely in the proper and literal sense of the word, but in the bad sense that survivals date from an epoch before our "wisdom that was born with us"; because whatever we do not understand we fear or dislike. The "emancipation of the artist" and the deliberate breaking with tradition are only special cases of our rejection of the perennial philosophy about which all the traditional arts are grouped in such a fashion as to satisfy the needs of the soul and the body together, in which case all the arts without exception, including those of leisure and of enjoyment, were applied arts.

The only things worthy of our serious consideration are those that have to do with God. If we are able to agree on this fundamental point, it is obvious that we ought by every means to avoid innovation in the types of our music and dancing and that to introduce change in the forms of arts for aesthetic reasons, that is, to please ourselves because our feelings are too much for us and must find an outlet, is nothing but a sort of slavery to our sensations.

What is needed in our Catholic world in America, and so far as is needed, are trained recreation leaders with the apostolic spirit, with a sense of joy and peace, with a knowledge of Catholic history and literature, who can find their way along the Christian way of life; who have discrimination and judgment and the courage to use a firm hand; who have the poise to steer a middle course between paganism and puritanism, and above all a thorough knowledge and love of the Church and her liturgy. Where these are to come from it is impossible to state, for no Catholic college, university, or preparatory school has a department of recreation. It is ironic and somewhat ridiculous that we should



ed leaders to teach our fellow-Christians how to play, but that is one more proof, if more were needed, of the disorientation of ern Catholics from their true course along the Christian way of

LEONARD AUSTIN

---



### SAD PSALMS

When Christ was King, and Mary Queen,

The people sang in chorus.

But now, in this unhappy reign,

We have our songs sung for us.

# The League of St. Liniment

I am one of that class of people to whom Abraham Lincoln referring when he said, "You can fool some of the people some of the time." Modest though I am, I refuse membership among his select group of citizens, "You can fool some of the people all of the time." There is a limit to my gullibility. You can't fool me all of the time. After an incredible length of time I catch on. It is because of this but eventual perception that I have finally concluded that there is more to the business of sports than meets the eye.

The occasion of my first awakening was about eleven years ago. I had been trying in an enthusiastic but bungling fashion to stir up my friends to some kind of Catholic social action. We were all recently out of school and currently out of work. It had occurred to me that we might put our heads together and try to make sense out of our common misfortune, although, I admit, I was a bit vague about what we could do about it.

My attack on the lads' inertia was as effective as a bow and arrow assault on an aircraft carrier. In a hyphenated word, I received a "brush-off." Just about the time that I had become accustomed to the social standing of a pariah, a new prospect loomed on the horizon. There was a school friend who had entered the seminary but was recalled by an aging mother who needed his support. "Ah!" I thought, "he will find a welcoming ear. A young fellow who had aspired to the priesthood should be just the boy to interest in Catholic social action! My friends were short-lived. The ex-seminarian immediately found a new outlet for the zeal he could no longer turn to the priesthood. It wasn't a lay apostolate. It was the league of St. Liniment. He became a sports fanatic.

For three months I waged a losing campaign. I suggested a sports club . . . he went to the "Y" to play handball. I thought we might read the papal encyclicals . . . we read the sports page. I hoped we might stir up some new converts . . . we stirred up new team-members. When the three months were up, I had developed an excellent batting average, I knew the batting average of every man in both Leagues, I had a bleacher tan, I was hoarse from shouting above the strident wailing of the sports' announcer . . . but I had lost a lay apostle.

Since that time I have become aware of the new brand of Catholic social action: the League of St. Liniment. I have attended many meetings, lectures, study clubs, and discussions. The topics covered at such meetings ranged from unionism to the liturgy. These meetings, which are the necessary preliminary to any kind of social action, were almost always predominantly attended by women. The women are militantly



ous, and more than willing to do their share. The boys and men with but few exceptions, I find, in the St. Liniment League.

To find out where the men were throwing their weight, one needed to look at the sports page. The thing read like a litany: St. Anastasius swamps Our Lady of Sorrows. . . . The Friars nose out a victory over the Crusaders. . . . Francis X. O'Hara, coach of St. Athlete, predicts downfall of Sacred Heart. . . . Father Aloysius McGee dined at Holy Name Society Sports Nite. . . . Sodalists pay tribute to winner of marathon . . . etc. . . .

It is a noteworthy fact that the American Catholic teen-agers who at the present time are gracing the diamonds and the gridiron are the same by age, and class, and sex of Catholics who in Europe constitute the backbone and spearhead of Catholic Action. The JOC in Belgium, the most glorious group of militants the Church has produced, are, in the main, teen-age youths.

Supposing, for a moment, that the American Church could disengage itself from the services of the young fellows, and leave them to their own devices, how about the older men? What becomes of them when the youth bunch appears, and the breath comes harder? They merely move from the League of St. Liniment, Jr. to the League of St. Liniment, Sr. They are the perennial spectators. From early spring to late fall their minds and hearts, news pages, and radio dials, turn to the baseball season of America. Between times they placate their appetite for sports with football, basketball, bowling, hockey, golf, tennis, and ping pong.

The amount of attention and daily meditation given, during the baseball season, to the history being made on the diamond, if turned, to the same Catholic men, to the history of the Church, would give Christopher Dawson and Hilaire Belloc as wide an audience in the Church as Grantland Rice. The same assiduous attention given to the rules and procedures of games and sports, if directed to the moral law and its application by the same Catholics, would remove the necessity of repeated Sunday sermons on elementary catechism. The same determination to master the cryptic lingo of the sports prophets, if turned to mastering liturgical Latin, would show quickly how little the need is for translating the Mass into the vernacular.

Once one becomes aware that the primary enemy of the Church in America is the yawn . . . indifference, and, once one realizes that indifference indicates that the heart is elsewhere, and, once one realizes where the hearts of most Catholic men lie . . . then, one wonders whether the enemies' banners, rather than being enscribed with the hammer and sickle, should not be emblazoned with balls and bats.

## What's the Score?

The foregoing was written by a man who delights in sports enjoy playing a poor game or watching a good one. There is no antagonism between taking delight in music and decrying the practice of fiddling while Rome burns. There is a time and place for all things. Games are a necessary part of childhood development; they certainly have a place as a form of adult recreation. Within a Christian context a more valid defense of sports can be offered than the usual arguments presented by the current defenders. When the worth of the game is fully appreciated it is easier to distinguish between use and abuse.

Games are as integral a part of childhood as work is a part of adult life. In essence, games are make-believe problems stripped of the complexities and seriousness which attend the real problems which they are analagous. Many talents being developed in the child find an opportunity for obvious development in games. The child sees his own progress in skill, strength, adaptability, and cooperation with his team-mates. With each new effort there is a compensating reward. Failures are punished, but not so seriously as to discourage renewed efforts. The usual steps are from individual effort, alone or in competition with others, to teamwork. In teamwork he comes to realize that his abilities must be coordinated with the cooperative scheme or else they are fruitless.

Certain social viruses present among the adult generation are contagiously spread among today's children. One of these is the desire to excel, to beat the other fellow. This competitive spirit is a natural instinct, a fact sufficient to recommend it to today's pagans. A Christian parent, however, recognizes that instinct is hardly the proper basis for human behavior. The spirit of cooperation is eminently natural to human, and, in the child's games, can be a disposition to supernatural virtue. It disposes the child to charity and justice. He learns to subordinate his own desires to the common good, and thus on the gridiron and diamond can learn his first lesson in social justice.

Another social virus which has entered the domain of childhood of sports comes as a consequence of spectatorism. When I was a boy we called the disease "grandstanding." In my neighborhood we took great delight in beating the stuffings out of "uniformed" teams. I had a hearty distaste for the team or player who played to the gallery who played to be admired. I have discovered that now many city teams won't play baseball or football unless they have uniforms and a large audience. By some strange combination of good intentions and common sense, some parochial groups consider it a work of charity to outfit the children's teams in big league togs. An elementary knowledge of



pose of the games in relation to childhood development would be to them that the introduction of spectatorism into games robs them of whatever value they have in developing virtues in the child. The purity of intention, the concentration of enthusiasm on one goal, the total giving—all these wonderful qualities of hard playing are all weakened by the introduction of the spectator complex. In their place we see the weakness of today's adults perverting the innocence of childhood: the mixed motive, the half-try, the mediocre ideal, the dramatic pretense and human respect.

When games and sports are thus perverted not only do they fail to build virtue in the boy, they actually soften him up so that he will conform more readily to the similarly false standards common in the adult workaday world.

Mamma's hand is very noticeable in the growing campaign against physical risk in sports. The school footballer now enters the field garbed in an outfit as impregnable as that of an ancient knight. The physical risk has been reduced to about the same level as that of boarding a New York subway train at rush hour. It has been overlooked that physical risk is a normal part of living. Courage in the youth can hardly be quickened when he meets no more fearsome danger than the possibility of a scratched hand. Assurance in the face of travail will not be evoked unless a more formidable problem is posed than that of avoiding a barked shin. Admittedly, in spite of the pads and the precautions, some bones are broken, but not with half as much frequency as those of old ladies who cross busy streets.

Games are, for children, what work is for men. One must notice how seriously children take their games. Children do not play for fun, they play intently. They are not just killing time. The process of growing up does not change in any way the attitude of the children toward those things which occupy their time. The same seriousness, concentration, and enthusiasm which children have at their games must be retained as the interest graduates from make-believe problems (games) to real problems (work). Nothing is changed except the object of the youths' attention. In games the situations are serious within their childhood context. When they pass from games to work, their handling of the situations become serious within a family or community context. Consequently, two facts emerge: that play is childhood work, and that the attitudes cultivated at play will determine the eventual attitude the child will have to his work.

To permit such perversions of games as hyper-competitiveness, or "grandstanding," is not merely to abuse the games, but also to weaken the work-qualities of the child.

## Professionalism

In professional sports one observes all of the social evils which characterize any field which is commercialized. The King Midas touch freezes everything into a golden, sterile image of what it had been before his coming. The introduction of the mammon motive into sports causes a completely new orientation of the game. So great is the change that *professionalized*, the game is liable to produce the opposite effect to that educed in its normal state.

Amateur childhood sports contribute greatly to making men of boys; professional sports contribute greatly to making boys out of men. Those who are at all intimate with professional sportsmen know what a childish lot they are. Their off-hour interests are usually sports games other than the ones they are paid to play. Their public demands in them the undisciplined behavior of children. The sports writers call it "color." Even the virtues they manifest are the virtues of a boy rather than a man. The tendency among them is to freeze into a school-boy pattern, giving a public testimony of eternal adolescence.

A mysticism of innocent and virile virtue has been quietly woven around the sports-hero, and it persists despite the obvious fact of social intimacy between professional sports and the more disreputable areas of society. The breakfast-food people juxtapose the sports hero with smiling ruddy-cheeked boys within the family circle, while sportsmen themselves, in their choice of off-hour associates (excluding the training ritual) frequently are found at home in the vicinity of race tracks, dice, poker chips, gin-mills and night clubs. A sports reporter keeping track of his celebrities would find himself in surroundings that would make a Boy Scout counsellor somewhat embarrassed. He would inadvertently become acquainted with more shady characters—con-men, tipsters, bar-flies, and lads who work the angles, than he would ever be able to forget. I am not accusing the sportsmen of vice, but I am not so naive as to further their canonization as espoused by the cornflakes box. My sons will get neither the flakes nor the color. Neither is very nourishing.

## In the Adult Division

Professional sports set the tone in recreation for the American male. As I have pointed out, the professional-spectator brand of sports vary in *kind*, that is, in purpose, intention and motive, from the childhood amateur-participant variety. One form does not evolve from the other. The child-participant is too young to assume a burden of weight, so he practices at manhood with the devised situations of games. The adult sport-spectator is a horse of a different color. In most cases he is a man unwilling to assume his share of community burdens, pre-



erring to leave them to the government, his boss, or to chance solution, and turns instead to the imaginary problems of the sports page. As manifested in Catholic circles, this defection accounts for the scarcity of men in the lay apostolate, that new and special obligation prescribed by the Church and made necessary by the times.

It is very easy to understand why men in our times concern themselves so reluctantly with the social order and so fervently with sports. It is not so obvious why such a practice is considered normal, if not virtuous, in some Catholic circles. A man goes to a ball game today to see one of the few kinds of modern enterprises conducted on simple, logical, moral, and just principles (I'm referring to the game itself, not the commercial institution). Baseball dramatically poses problems which are resolved in a manner to delight the human heart. To gain victory on the field, the player must work for it. His reputation, chicanery, or knowing the right people, cannot be used as substitutes for good pitching, good fielding, or good hitting. The score is proportional to skill and effort. All of these qualities appeal to man's moral sense, and to his elementary justice. In baseball there is a logical sequence of causes and effects. The first man up gets a single . . . the second man lays down a successful bunt . . . a long fly from the bat of the third hitter sends the men to second and third . . . then No. 4 batter gets up, the heavy hitter . . . what will he do? Will he drive the men home with a base hit? Will the pitcher strike him out? Here is logic to please the simplest soul! Here is drama without sophistry!

What a far cry this make-believe world is from the modern political forum, the sales-room, the stock exchange! In the realm of politics what relation is there now between merit and office? In business who would dare say that reward is in relation to honest effort? The hard worker barely gets along, if *that*. The shrewd calculator, the man who sees the angles, secures the softest feathers and the warmest nest. What logic is there in unemployment? What logic is there in the current housing shortage? We are now audience to the spectacle of our political leaders turning their backs on crises at home and abroad while they load the electoral dice. These processes, political and economic, without logic, without justice, without deference to moral law, drive the citizen to the ball parks for a renewal of his shaken belief in sanity and conscience.

It is to be realized that social and political problems, even under ideal conditions, would present circumstances more complex and more trying than those resolved in sports arenas. As a periodic relief from such cares, games normally will be employed for adult recreation. The fact today, however, is that sports fanaticism is less recreational than escapist. It is less a renewal of energies and perspectives than an escape

from the task of resolving the real problems. Spectator sports, world over, are increasing in popularity in inverse proportion to popular interest in matters of the common good. Games have become substitutes for work.

### Who's On First?

Why do sports in parochial circles have an aura of virtue about them? Why, for example, will one find the average curate more willing and capable to direct in matters of sports than in matters of Catholic Action? The fact that one can replace the other in the curriculum of parochial activities should be enough proof that the question of sports is by no means a superficial one. To my mind this simple matter of priority is a key to the puzzle of Catholic indifference.

Catholicism as manifested by practicing Catholics is best described as being in the stage of retarded adolescence. It is big and muscular, well-attended Masses, busy novena services. It has promise: practicing Catholics in key social positions—mayors, corporation presidents, etc. It has a large appetite: many Communion, Confessions, and other sources of grace. In spite of these things that heighten our expectations, the Faith is not an operative force in society or in family life. At present there is no relation between its potentialities for good and its actual effectiveness.

The same adolescence characterizes the spiritual growth of many Catholics. Our devotion is preparational, a getting ready for sanctification, a some-day-Lord-but-not-yet sort of thing. Then, of course, apostolicity is rare, and this, if not the mark of Christian maturity, is the occasion for it.

The tendency has been to freeze Catholicism at the eighth grade parochial school level. This stage of development is regarded as a high point and the norm of practical Catholicism. The religious habits of this period in growth are the ones to which the adult feels conscientiously bound to return. Sermons, devotional practices, the choice of staid hymns, are, on the whole, the kind best designed to help an eighth-grader hew to the straight and narrow.

This camp-site was supposedly chosen because all the territory that lies beyond the frontiers of the parochial school is held by the enemy. It is unexplored and unclaimed for Christ. It is the stamping ground for the world, the flesh, and the devil, that unholy trinity which has reigned over the secular area for four centuries. The enemy's lines are punctured at one particular spot, and it is a slight bulge indeed. I refer to the area of sports. The Church, in her glory, seldom hits the front pages of our newspapers and never invades the editorial page, but the sports page is another thing! In the realm of sports the Catholic



feel at home. The Irish of Notre Dame have made known the existence of the Catholic Church as a formidable force, if not for producing saints, well, then, quarter-backs. In good conscience, without fear of challenge, the Catholic can invade any arena in America and hold his own. The honor is hollow but nevertheless real.

Because of their consistency with our ideals, sports have been taken to our hearts. This canonization of boy-virtue fits into the all-over pattern of adolescence. Briefly, the scandal is this: we raise the question by our choice of arenas as to whether Catholic virtue can cope with any situation beyond the boyhood stage. "Our boys will do well at the Rose Bowl." *But I wonder what we can do as lay apostles in business, in factories, in politics.* We are actually afraid to set mature Christianity in opposition to mature paganism. We are pessimistic of the results were we to invade the offices and the shops with a dynamic revolutionary Christian spirit, so we satisfy ourselves by challenging the pagans to a ball game.

The choice is quite clear. We can shift the emphasis in male leisure-time activities from sports to the apostolate, or we can go on kidding ourselves that Christian virtue is identical with sportsmanship. The choice is between a mature Christianity worked out or a juvenile Christianity played out. When Catholic Action in the fields of work, of politics, of law, of medicine, of the family, win them the same laurels and the same respect (and, of course, the same kicks in the head) that the activities of Catholics now earn on the gridiron, we will have begun to make an impression. Mature Christians will be facing up to mature problems. When that time comes, what crank could complain about an occasional game of sports?

ED WILLOCK



### TRIBUTE

Let virtue be its own reward

For heroes who maintain us,

But, grateful nation, pour thy gifts

On those who entertain us.

# The Dating System

It is only at rare and awful moments in history that God is excluded from human society. When that happens, as it has happened our day, one can expect to find the very roots of the social order disjointed and perverted. That is why contemporary Christians have to be radicals. It may be unpleasant to learn that you have built your economic or social or political life on sand, but it is better to learn sooner than later, if it is true. It should be a consolation anyhow to discover how badly the world fares without God. In this article we are going to consider one of the favorite pillars of secular social life: the dating system.

## It Is Based on a False Principle

As competition is to the economic system (that is, the false principle upon which it rests), so is the dating system to the social life of our youth. Let us first get straight what dating is. Dating is the prevailing system in America for meeting and mating, that is, for the social life of unmarried but marriageable people. Its essence is the pairing off of couples for unchaperoned activity of whatever sort. It stands in opposition to a variety of other systems formerly or currently in effect here and elsewhere. It is useful to mention some of the other systems by way of contrast. In some pagan countries it is the custom for unmarried girls to be completely isolated from young men until the day (at an early age) when they are married to husbands of their parents' choice. In Latin-American countries a system of chaperonage prevails, young girls being allowed to attend some social functions with eligible and carefully selected young men, but always accompanied by an adult, although some privacy is allowed to engaged couples. Our tradition (ante-dating) has been largely that of the family and church gatherings where young people met and mixed informally in groups, usually while participating in some vigorous activity like folk dancing. The dating system is different essentially from all of these. It means a pairing off of one girl with one boy when both are of marriageable age, physically anyhow. If there happen to be parents around, or if it is a double or a triple date, or if adolescents sometimes gather in large groups, these are accidental variations from the system and do not change its essence, although they may modify its effects.

Any system of mixed social life for unmarried young men and women must be judged by whether or not it conduces to good marriage and it is on this basis that dating must be regarded as an unfortunate system. It is important to see that dating must be judged in the light of future marriage. It cannot be considered the same as the case



creation of boys and girls who have not yet reached adolescence, imply because adolescence changes radically the physical and psychological relationship between the sexes. Nor can dating be considered as leading nowhere in particular. Marriage is the adult and stable state to which all post-adolescent relations between the sexes normally end. Whether or not those dating consider their actions in the light of matrimony is beside the point; the system remains auxiliary to matrimony as its natural end.

### Dating Is Not a Good Way to Choose a Mate

The goal in finding a husband or wife is to come out with the *one* person best suited to oneself. Normally there should be a process of selection based on common and casual activity with a likely group (of similar age, background, religion and education). One's interest normally will narrow to a few and finally to *one* as a suitable time for marriage approaches. The intimacy and isolation of dates is not necessary until the engagement period. Dating works backwards. It offers *one* to begin with, who need not necessarily be suitable in any way. (We are thinking particularly of girls here. Their parents don't choose their dates for them and when they are off at school or college or work, they meet someone through a blind date or because he's sitting at the next desk and it's only by chance that he would have a similar background or tastes.) As far as the dating system is concerned one might be going around with that one the rest of one's life. There is nothing in the system itself which allows for meeting other eligible young men or women. Accidentally, however, one might meet someone else's date and take up with him or her, or one might start the whole process over again with whoever is sitting at the desk on the other side or with another blind date. Most young people acquire some assortment of occasional dates before long but that does not mean necessarily that they have on hand a string of potential husbands or wives; more often it is a case of acquiring a series of acquaintances of the opposite sex, no one of whom, for this reason or that, is a serious matrimonial prospect.

Besides narrowing down from the beginning something which should be selective, dating is further exclusive in that it is a competitive affair. Some girls (and boys) have all the dates, while others who look less like Lana Turner or who haven't got what it takes to shine in an atmosphere of juke boxes and drug store cokes, are cruelly neglected. If the qualities which would make a girl a popular date were the same qualities which make her a good wife and mother, or if male popularity were a reflection of Christian manliness and presaged future good "husbandry," then there would be some excuse for the poignant suffering inflicted on those who, at a sensitive age, do not make the grade of

popular appeal. As things stand, however, it is hard to see how Christian youth can justify excluding so many as it does from what should be their normal fun.

## The Dating System Is an Occasion of Sin

Despite its Kinsey Reports, contemporary America may go down in history as our most naive period, that is, naive about the very thing in which its citizens profess to be knowing and sophisticated—chiefly sex. Someone must know what it's all about but the ordinary citizen doesn't see the connection between advertising art and adultery, the dichotomy between *Life* magazine's photography and its earnest editorials, the ratio between immodest dress and fornication, or the cause and effect relationship between the dating system and sins of impurity.

Physical attraction between a young man and a young woman is a mere matter of chemistry, and the compound can be formed of almost any chance elements. Knowing this, other generations have conspired to keep young people at a fairly considerable distance from each other until a harmony was attained between them on the spiritual, intellectual, and practical basis. They knew that physical harmony would follow quickly and easily, and favored early marriages with fairly short engagements. Nowadays parents allow their thirteen-year-old daughters to go "steady," and carefully leave home when the young folks are throwing a party there. They have no real right to be astonished at any of the consequences which result.

It is possible to go on dates without committing sins of impurity, but there is no evidence whatever that this is the usual case. The circumstances of dating invite impurity; both in the essential circumstance which is the pairing off (it makes little difference here whether it is a single or a double date, for there is a code of dating ethics which demands scrupulous disregard by the couples of each other), and in the accidental circumstances of automobiles, suggestive movies and drinking.

One of the most tragic situations today is that of young married couples who already hate each other and are ready for divorce at twenty-one. They are the victims of "chemical explosions," often date-induced. They "fell for each other" physically (it is so easy) before they had an opportunity to explore each other's minds or characters, much less the depths of each other's souls, and after the chemical action set in it was too late to learn anything else. Love of that sort distorts all judgments. Unfortunately, chemistry doesn't stand up long under the realities of married life. One day its charm is suddenly gone, and the bride and groom face a life which will be a real martyrdom if they are to save their souls.



## Other Unlovely Effects of the Dating System

The dating system is not only unsuited to marriage as an end but doesn't even profess to be directed toward marriage. Few boys want to take a girl out if she is looking for a husband, and yet she should be looking for a husband, and he for a wife. One still finds the tradition among some of the Irish of not going out (more than once or twice anyhow) with someone whom one doesn't intend to marry. There is much to be said for this stand which regards matrimony very seriously.

The dating system probably has a worse effect on girls than it does on boys. It is no disgrace for a man if he doesn't date, and so the more serious ones just don't. Either they find a girl in the course of their work or study whom they wish to marry, and quietly go out with her until such time as they can marry or they abstain entirely from dating while young. It would be interesting to see how many of today's prominent men were prominent daters in college or high school. Probably their prominence reflects time well and seriously spent in their formative years. It would be useful also to interview the wives of men who dated much in their youth (Has your husband learned to fix furnaces yet? Is he making full use of the talents God gave him? Is it any fun to live with a "life of the party"? Does he have difficulty with fidelity?). It has always been evident to everyone except those who most need to know that the smoothest dates usually make the worst mates.

But the effect of the dating system on girls is worse than it is on boys; the more popular the girl, the worse the effect. If Susie starts dating at thirteen or fifteen or whenever they start now, is very popular, and doesn't get married until she is twenty-two, she will have had the opportunity to have gone through the preliminaries of the preliminaries of marriage with several hundred boys and men in that time. Let us suppose that Susie is a determinedly virtuous girl, which is quite a gratuitous assumption these days. Even so, she will have become skilled at the art of superficially attracting men, at making largely nonsensical conversation, at entertaining an assortment of vacant-headed young men, and at warding off innumerable threats to her purity. Her vanity will have been given every opportunity to turn her whole nature toward a self-love which is the worst possible basis of marriage.

Some of these ill-effects are generally recognized. There is another which escapes almost everyone's attention: the supreme waste of time which dating involves—whether in dating itself or in preparing for dates or scheming to date or discussing dates. A person's whole youth passes in this curiously inept process of *choosing* a mate. Where is any consideration given at all to *preparing* to make a good husband or wife?

## Getting Rid of the Dating System

Dating as a system has obscure origins. The laxity of parents, big-city life, modern dancing and music, small apartments, and commercialization of recreation are doubtless all contributory factors. But the remote genesis must have been spiritual, involving a moral and intellectual decline, a perversion of religion and then a revulsion from it. Certain it is in any case that only a spiritual reconstruction can change it now.

The new Christian families which are being formed may nevertheless come to blows with the dating system. Their homes will respond to the rhythm of the liturgical year, their children will be formed apostolically from early childhood, and probably grow up to marry other first fruits of the lay apostolate.

The problem, then, does not center around the next generation but around this generation. It focuses on the teen-agers and boxers who have been nurtured on cokes and comics, movies and newspaper bands; who have been led by Hollywood and mass circulation magazines to believe themselves the final flowering of emancipation, the lovely end product of progress. It is for their sakes that the dating system should be changed but it is also *by them* that it must be changed for their parents lack the authority, the desire and the basis for corporate action.

It will not be hard to change the dating system if young people want it changed, but they have fallen into the habit of thinking that they are *privileged* to go on dates, instead of realizing how they are betrayed by the system. Any serious move by a group of adolescent leaders (say a Catholic Action ferment) will work for the demolition of the system. Suppose such a group were to consider seriously the goal of marriage. Any study on the subject (say of the Church's teaching) or a poll of young married people in their neighborhood to see if they were happy and, if not, why not) would serve to bring dating into perspective. They would soon see that marriage is not "one long date" as the advertisers more or less suggest, but that it is a serious and marvelous adventure to which dating is a poor prelude.

Let's suppose that our hypothetical teen-agers were to make a serious study of "unselfishness" in school. Surely they would discover that dating conduces to the happiness of the very few. If, then, they were to set about, as a project, to try to make *all* their classmates happy and have common fun, they would find themselves doing away with the dating system.

A similar effect would follow any honest inquiry into adolescent morality. It would be discovered that youthful casuistry (which knows the hairline beyond which venial sin begins, and can stipulate ex-



the border between venial and mortal sin) is not the highway to purity. They would discover how useful it is to divert youthful attention to matters apostolic and wholesome.

Once there is Christian conviction in the matter it will be easy to change the pillars of social life. Then the parochial parties sponsored by the churches will take on a Christian orientation (and not seem, as they often do, an ecclesiastical sponsorship of secular and pagan festivities). Then family and house parties will be stimulated again. Then folk dancing will be seen for the wholesome fun that it is (and the more Christian and graceful dances will be learned). We may even hope that the blatant and hideous noises which emerge from juke boxes will begin to offend youthful ears (One of the interesting minor phenomena of our time is the transformation of the appearance of juke boxes to conform more and more to the way they sound—sort of hellish).

### A Final Word

It does not follow from the fact that the dating system is essentially inept, and an occasion of sin, that everyone has to stop dating forthwith. Boy must still meet girl, and the way to reform social life is not to drop out of it altogether. But let those who date realize what they are about and work toward structural reforms in the social system.

DOROTHY X. DIX

---



### GET YOUR SCORE CARDS!

When dad takes mother to the game,  
She doesn't know the score.  
When she takes daddy down to Mass,  
He doesn't know much more.

*Americans are a deeply  
religious people.*







# Brother, Can You Spare An Hour?

When the factory whistle blows it would be foolhardy to stand in front of the time clock. You might be trampled in the rush of time servers, Homer Faber and his fellow workers. When Homer is at home doing something for himself, he must be driven to dinner to bed since he is not working on a time schedule but on a work of his hands. As a factory worker he serves time for eight hours. His work is repetitive and never ending, the same today and tomorrow.

Time is money. Time is what he sells, together with his motions. He cannot sell his work, since that is a personal thing, which he sells differently from his neighbor. The factory wants his time and his motions to be exactly the same as his neighbor's. His muscles twitch as the clock ticks. The factory pays him by the hour and continually studies to get him to make more motions in the hour, so the cost per motion will be reduced.

After Homer Faber punches his clock card he enters upon his leisure time which is his own. He can use it as he wishes. He can throw it away and be a time-killer. He can employ it in isolation and loneliness, or he can use his leisure to prepare himself and his fellow workers to bring about a changed order in which he can sell his personal work or use it for his own and his neighbor's benefit. He can use his spare time to rebuild the personality that money-making monotony has broken down.

## Leisure: The Promised Land

Homer's boss admits that his work is monotonous, but he points out the comfort goods that it produces and to the monetary reward. He holds out the promised land of the Leisure State, when machinery will make goods with a few hours labor, and the worker can spend the rest of his time pursuing culture and amusement. This is the end to which Homer is working, and he looks forward to the closing whistle of the week-end, the holiday, the summer vacation.

He will not wait for the Leisure State, however. "This time I want it now!" he says. He is desperate from the misuse of his faculties by the factory. He wants excitement, escape. The nearest form is in the bar across the street.

If God is not in noise He is not in the factory. The bar abhors silence. It is said that Americans stand most in fear of a moment's silence. The noise of the juke box and loud talk are considered pleasant in contrast to the noise of machinery. Homer, now free from the technological monastery, craves excitement, and sick of noise and motion ordered by another, he can only assuage the deep wound to



erson by another sort of madness of noise and immolation. Here he responsible at least in the beginning, and he will have responsibility en if it be responsibility in sin.

When he gets drunk his real self seems to step aside and watch the her self in the irresponsibility of drowned inhibitions, in the devil's wn freedom. There is the omniscience of the thick tongue and then merciful oblivion. He recovers his responsibility in bodily rebellion and spiritual remorse. There is compensation even in his physical isery if it keeps him away from the factory, even for a day.

## **Drivers Are Expendable**

Homer escapes from the factory into another avenue of pseudo-freedom. He can master the thing on which he spends his miserable working life. The automobile possesses him during hours of toil; outside he will possess it and drive like the devil himself. With his foot on the accelerator he gives himself up to the absolutely corrupting power of speed. In the Satyr Six he can be master of that long concrete ribbon of super-highway. His mastery over this engine is revocable. There are seven devils in that powerful and beautiful chariot of colored steel. There is one in the windshield, ready to rip his body to ribbons. The others lurk in the engine and the metal, ready to wrap it as a grotesque shroud around him or make it into a chalice for his blood, the moment that his control over this deadly weapon wavers.

The car has gentle uses, however. He can escape with the masses on a dusty Sunday to the cottage and the lake. He can become a tan an-god and make the girls in the shop think him an industrial Apollo. He can take his car on a vacation and skim the places marked on the auto club map, so that he returns with a statistical account of mileages and punctures.

## **I Can Dream Can't I?**

On the other hand, Homer may be a fellow who has had all the fight beaten out of him, so that he is as bland as a processed cheese. He comes out of the factory and escapes into a private dream world, in which he is always the hero rescuing the girl, at whom he stares in the cafeteria, from the foreman and telling him off with brilliant sarcasm.

His dream world is abetted by the movies, the radio, the Books-you-cannot-do-without-Club. He likes to listen to the radio, and retell the jokes to his neighbor on the line, who has listened to the same program, so that they can have another laugh together. He reads the managed murders in the pulp magazines and quarter books. Hollywood brings out all his subconsciousness cravings and slides them across the screen of never-never life. From the book clubs he buys culture by the pound in thousand-page tomes of adventure and vengery.

## Squatters and Gladiators

If he is not satisfied with fictional heroes, he goes to the stadium and watches the heroes of his favorite sport, baseball, football, hockey. He has sent his children to school to become educated clerks, and sports are encouraged at school to teach manly competition which is said to fit his sons for worldly combat, if not spiritual combat. The faculties of the high schools and colleges find that football especially is worthwhile since Homer and thousands of others will pay to watch it. The purpose then becomes not so much to develop competitors as to develop winners. Winners build the stadium and the stadium is more important than the triduum, at least to pay the mortgage. The local Catholic university which could be a center for the solution of Homer's industrial problems is better known for its course in Money and Banking and its football team. Good college players graduate into the professional game, and make a silk purse out of a cauliflower. Homer likes to watch the proficiency of the professionals. In summer he watches the pro baseball players at the big league park. The regular ascetic (at a high salary) is here contemplated by the factory workers by day, or by night under the wonder of electric moonlight. Homer reclines in his seat with a bottle of pop and a hot dog and gets himself up to the thrill of the struggle. Next day the sports writers will provide him black and white confirmation of the importance of this pastime, and a variety of statistics to fill an idle hour with argument or provide the basis for a few bets.

Do not suppose that Homer does not indulge in some active sports. He, as well as the boss, goes golfing in summer and bowling in winter. This enables him to develop a skill that is denied him in the factory. If he wears the proper costume and buys the right tools, with assiduous practice he may become very expert in driving a small ball into a cup on a well trimmed lawn, or rolling a cannon ball across a highly polished floor to knock down ten pins. If he becomes expert in these things, he will have a status among his fellow workers that the amount of effort will give him in the shop.

## Other People's Money

Homer works solely for money. His boss works only for profit. Homer resents the fact that the factory owner has plenty of money and skill in handling it. He knows that capital comes from an ability to build a business on other people's money. In his spare time he tries to gain skill in gathering other people's money by means of cards, roulette, and the pari-mutuels. He has week-end poker sessions with his friends from the factory, with an occasional game of craps for those who demand more action.

The greatest adventure is the occasional trip to the race track. In the planned uncertainty of the horse races he can have plenty of thrill and excitement as antidote to the poison of drab work, where Luck is worshipped as the will of God; all this and the dream of big killing, when he can enter the golden door of the world of money, the club house where sit the big shots who hold him inured.

### That Long Pursuit

Are we to condemn Homer Faber because he uses his leisure to make bearable the unpleasant working hours? He is a good man. He works for his parish, he ushers at Mass, and serves on committees for dances and bingo parties. He is well known at the rectory as a faithful worker. If he likes to isolate that part of his life outside of factory walls in quiet services of his family and parish, who can find fault? While in implicit rebellion against the system that enslaves him at work he has, after all, eked from it a mortgaged home and a car. He spends the hours at the shop so that he can come home and putter around the house or go for a drive. The system is wrong, no doubt, but what can he do save keep himself and his family out of the road to a mad world?

Can we say that he sells his working time and wastes his own leisure? It seems that the factory workers in their leisure are always seeking, and do not find what they are seeking. They live on a plane of "hilarious anesthesia" in order to dull the pain of industrialism. Their tragedy is the emptiness of work and the seeking of fulfillment in recreation that should come from the work. The work is for the sake of the recreation, when the recreation should be for the sake of the work. Is it not the terrible search of the soul, restless for love, who cannot find rest except in Eternal Love? This Coney Island age offers many substitutes that we snatch them in our bitter hunger. In the little and promiscuity we seek to untangle cramped emotions in unwholesome shams.

What, for instance, is wrong with innocent pastimes like bowling? We have bowled and like it. Yet there is something amiss in giving our spare time to pastimes when a world is falling to pieces, and when many are giving their spare time to give the world an extra push over the precipice. It becomes increasingly a problem of eliminating from our lives the non-essential things because it is later than we think.

Years ago I met a fellow high school graduate in a bowling alley on a Sunday. He was bowling but made the remark: "Isn't this a waste of time?" He proved that he really thought so, because a short time later he went into the Jesuit novitiate. All of us need to meditate on the use of our spare time. We need recreation, but what we really



get out of these games are friendly competition and development of skill, of which we are starved in our work, as well as companionship and exercise. It is a problem for each to consider whether this is whistling in the graveyard. We have only the day in which to work and the night is not far off when no man can work.

### **What Is Truth?**

In the matter of reading for recreation, is there an obligation to read something besides the daily comics and the detective stories? There is an obligation upon those who find time to devour so much killing printed matter. In a simpler age of indifferent communication there was no such obligation upon men who found their problems confined to local judgments with adequate information. Today a very flood of printed matter and continuous hammering of world affairs into all minds via the radio, and the indiscriminate flood of books of manufactured popularity, make it necessary for the literate to do some research to form proper judgments, since the popular newspaper and magazine publishers have a vested interest in things as they are, things by which they make their livings. An antidote must be sought in Catholic and non-profit publications, and in critical books. The great American love of self-improvement reading, cultivated by digests and popular books, could well be turned to the fine spiritual books that are being published today. Mere passive reception of the stream from the communication arts will form opinions and prejudices whether we will it or not, unless there is some seeking for truth. It is not sufficient to adopt a cynical scepticism toward all preachments. Right action must be based on true knowledge.

### **A Time for Greatness**

There must be right action. Time is not money, time is eternal. Time is the moment which we are given by God to work out our salvation by means of our vocation. The clock holds us in thrall for eight hours, but we are still called. If we rush from work into thoughtless pleasure saying: "Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow-there is no tomorrow," we are allowing the world to go to judgment with no resistance to the forces of evil.

It is said that the present age has lost the secret of solitude. In regards our neighbor we have a double problem, to get closer to him and to get away from him. In this century of the common elbow, our neighbor always gets into the same lineups that we do. It would be easier to love our brother if we could hold him at arm's length to know what manner of man he is, and if we could escape from him into solitude to see what manner of man we are. In prayer and contemplation we need to discover ourselves and then we will be in a position to discover our neighbor. There is time for greatness for the greatest.

ce. The liturgy of the Church consecrates time, and the best place for us to discover ourselves is at the foot of the altar. Factory hours make it almost impossible to begin the day with Mass. There are hundreds in clerical positions however, whose hours are adapted to beginning the day with this supreme act in time. In the cross all the world's problems are resolved. Christ on the cross overcame the world. We can overcome the world if we begin our efforts at the altar, at the daily extension of the cross in time, at the bridge between eternity and time. We can discover our vocation at the altar of God.

The action of the Mass can be used to leaven the masses if we personally deepen our spiritual life and then act in our environment in cooperation with those whom we can discover of like mind. There are many movements that work against the inertia that merely whistles and waits for the crash. The dew of the Holy Spirit is spreading over parched earth. There could be a beginning in detachment from the comfort frills that forge the shackles of industrialism, in a poverty of spirit that eliminates the non-essential of spare-time activities.

The factory worker must leaven his environment within his labor union. The clerk must become something other than a comfortable individualist. They cannot remain out of the agonies of a world that struggles to lose its life in order to gain it. The materialists of communism gain recruits with spiritual appeals. Will those who proclaim themselves Christian be deaf to any but economic arguments?

We will never have any more time than the twenty-four hours a day that we have now. The hours after work belong to us while we are still free. We have a choice of escaping into a world of forgetfulness, in recreation that deadens, or to embrace the struggle for a new creation, to add mortar to the bricks of God's will. It is, indeed, a time of greatness.

JOHN HICKS  
Detroit, Michigan

## THE TRAPPISTS AT VALLEY FALLS WOULD LIKE SOME BOOKS FOR THEIR LIBRARY:

The cloistered monks at Our Lady of The Valley Abbey in Rhode Island read to increase their knowledge of the Faith and their intimacy with God. They would be grateful if you could provide them with any book or books likely to serve that purpose.

Please mail donations of books to William Cobb, c/o ALDNY, INC., 37-28—30th St., L. I. C., N. Y.

# The Only Child

The young boy stared vacantly at the shadowed wall,  
Stared vacantly at the sinewed branches, the curling  
Leaves on the shadowed wall.

His lithe form curved limply under the rumpled covers,  
Curved limply then straightened, then tossed then rolled,  
Then settled under the rumpled covers.

He thought of Johnny and Johnny had Richard and Richard  
Had Mary and Mary had Therese, all in one family.  
And he had no one.

He thought of Mother and Mother had Aunt Cel' and Aunt  
Had Uncle Jim and Uncle Jim had Uncle Bill, all in one family.  
And he had no one.

Except himself—himself was his playmate on rainy days,  
Himself drilled soldiers, built forts, visioned legends  
In the winter, on rainy days.

The air he breathed was free of germs, sterilized, empty,  
Free from all grit, all vapor, the voices of brothers,  
Sisters; it was antiseptic, empty.

A desert of loneliness, hedged by dawn and evening,  
Preserved by Mother, by Father, by four rooms, by the new,  
By the gods of the Market Place and their Law—the  
Standard of Living.

A gnawing hunger, growing with the fibre and the flesh,  
Locked in the soul, poisoning the heart, shrinking the spirit  
Stirring the mind to incessant fantasy—the Counterfeit  
of Friendship.

A wall of silent nonentity, barrier to the human,  
Forbidding the warm embrace of innocent youth,  
The childish secrets, the impetuous squabbles,  
The reality of make-believe—the magic of childhood.

The young boy stared with moist eyes at the shadowed wall,  
Stared with moist eyes at the cross-antlered boughs,  
The shifting leaves on the shadowed wall.

"Hail Mary, full of grace, send me a buddy so we can play."  
Ave Maria, none is more lonely than a lonely child,  
Send him a buddy so he can play.

SEAN O'FEARGHAIL



## **X Marks the Spot Where Charity Once Grew**

Manipulate exteriors—forget a client has a soul.  
Find eligibility for each and every dole.  
If you're astute in social work  
Your client can his duties shirk,  
For you allow more family money  
If he neglects his wife and sonny.  
By all means, prod unclean details,  
And see that family instinct fails.  
God forbid uprolling sleeves  
And helping clients clean, from eaves  
To cellar. That's unprofessional!  
And never mention the confessional.  
It's far more wise to use psychiatry!  
All hail the new idolatry!  
Eliminate all charity. The word is now "relief."  
Who once was Reverend Father is "social worker chief."

MARIE LAUCK

---

### **Progressive Education**

By dint of thought, profound and deep,  
With worry sore, and loss of sleep,  
We now produce a college grad  
Who cannot write or spell or add;  
Whose reading's immature as yet;  
Who doesn't know the alphabet.  
Although the superstructure's splendid,  
The thing's not quite what we intended;  
For somehow, we, in our elation,  
Forgot to put in the foundation.

SR. ST. FRANCIS, S.S.J.



### VIGIL OF THE FEAST

Tomorrow is the Sabbath Day,

A time of quiet ease,

So let's go out and through the night,

Exhaust our energies.

# Symbols of Sin

Modern man knows a great many facts of which the medieval man was ignorant. Today man can get a long list of figures and statistics about anything he wants—or does not want: the number of marriages or divorces, the number of cars or houses, or the different types of people that live in the houses. But in the Middle Ages even the population of cities was often only a rough guess, and no man thought of asking how many people wore sandals and how many didn't. The medieval man didn't know for what many *things* are on earth, as the modern man does, and yet he did know one rather important thing: he did know for what *he* was here on earth, which the modern man doesn't!

All of this means that sin, an evil and a terrible thing, though essentially a negative thing, meant something to the medieval man. But today, because so many people don't know their true destiny, sin is regarded as less than a negative which demands some positive counter-part; it is regarded as nothing, or at best as something very indistinct and indefinite like a photographic negative.

But there still exists a piece of writing that shows what sin still really means in a very concrete way. It was done many years ago when the light of a man's genius shone through the negative of sin and painted a picture of it in the striking symbolical colors of sense experience. The name of the artist was Dante and the name of this tragic part of his *Divine Comedy* is called the Inferno, which is a polite name for hell.

Disgusting disorder, dire suffering, degrading sub-human activity and dreadful loss; this is the close-up he gives of what unrepented sin means.

First of all there is disorder and the resulting confusion everywhere. The eye looks in vain for anything like natural beauty of life. There is only scarred, charred, dead earth, dark swirling clouds of smoke, ugliness and barrenness everywhere! Only wails and cries, wrangling, blasphemy, and hate greet the ear. The nose is plagued with every conceivable disgusting odor, that of filth, of diseased bodies, of burnt matter everywhere. This, Dante says, is what sin really means. In Dante's hell those who try constantly to quiet their passions by giving to them really do fulfill the prophecy of Osee: "For they shall sow and and reap a whirlwind." Here the lovers of fine foods and delicate dishes, the gourmands of the world "whose God is their belly" spend their lives, or rather, their deaths, grovelling in mud and mire. Flatterers who fill others with their fine words are fittingly fixed in human



filth. And those who are hypocrites, who seem to make so light of and justice, are really making for themselves heavy copes of lead!

Again, sin which seems to give so much pleasure, shows what really merits: pain. The violent against God who scorn His mercy are pictured aptly sitting on the sand in a rain of fire. Those who sow scandal and schism, who spend their lives cutting the Mystical Body of Christ, reap what they have sown; they are being hacked to pieces by demons for all eternity. The treacherous coldly following their schemes are really burying themselves in ice.

Sin makes man less a man. We have heard this a thousand times, but in the Inferno we see what this means as again and again we see men bound down to matter, and wasting an eternity in fruitless activity, "emptying the sea with a sieve." Misers spend their eternity paying their debt to God by rolling dead weights endlessly around a circle. Thieves find themselves snakes which is what Christ called a curse on a group of them: "Ye brood of vipers!"

But the subtlest underlying reality of unrepented sin that Dante tries to bring out in a concrete way is the dreadful pain of *loss*, especially hard for us today to see this aspect of the Inferno for reasons which I will try to point out later, but if we view the Inferno against the background of the Middle Ages, the life and times of medieval man, we can come much closer to some sort of a realization of what Dante was trying to do.

Those were the Ages of Faith when religion wasn't confined to the four walls of a church, but filled the world with something like the breath of spring. There was order in men's lives, and in the world. The lower was subject to the higher, the natural was directed toward the supernatural. There was natural beauty in the world, and that deep sacramental beauty in the Franciscan idea of a universe where everything was not only itself but also the sign of something divine. In our age we are content with absolute relativism, the strange contradiction which says that everything is something else and not a sign of anything. In the Middle Ages many a medieval Christian saw Christ's "blood upon the rose and the stars the glory of His eyes." He found that even "the air is eloquent of God." For he believed in Christ's blood and in stars, in glory and in God. There was sin, yes, just as there is slush in the spring, but there was also God, and none pretended that murder and hypocrisy were particularly necessary for progress and enlightenment, or that having children or faith were particularly hostile to them. There was sin, certainly, but there were human beings, but there was also Christ and Christianity everywhere: in the cathedrals that sent towers spiraling prayerward toward the sky, in their holidays which were really holydays. Men gave up one another in Christ and left one another in God. This was Christ.

nity in the Middle Ages when "all Europe wept over the wounds of Christ."

Placed in a background like this, Dante's Inferno takes on a new significance. To a mind used to seeking order in things, as the medieval mind was, to a mind used to seeing beauty in things, and used to seeing men doing work fit for human beings, how could the disorder, the ugliness, the degrading dehumanization Dante pictured, be anything but the long loud cry of the pain of loss? And never to see any Christian symbol, any church or cross, or any Christian hope or love; never to hear mention of any Way or Truth or Life, what would these cause but a roar of anguish over the pain of their loss?

If we do not appreciate the pain of loss in Dante's hell, it is because we are too familiar with the loss. Men since Dante's time have gone a long way toward making a hell of the world, without Christ in their lives, without Christ in the marketplace, without Christ in their governments. And so now we can greet one another, leave one another, talk endlessly with one another without any mention of the Christ that is or would be in one another. The truth is that Dante's Inferno is much too close a resemblance to the modern world with its materialism, its wrangling and mud-slinging, its lack of hospitality, and its lack of fruitfulness, for us to feel that anything important is missing! The Twentieth Century has made such amazing progress along these lines that it can celebrate Christmas without having Christ or the Mass at the celebration.

We cannot fully appreciate how dark life is without Christ because we have never lived in a Christ-lit world. We do not expect to turn a quiet city corner and suddenly have our breath taken away by a beautiful marriage of stone and art, grandeur and mystery, all sweeping heavenward in the form of a cathedral. But we are not surprised to find, instead, a huge walled building with lurid lights and a more lurid picture covering its front, advertising a continuous showing of sin. The City of Dis is not unknown to us!

We are not sad because there are no shrines, though we would be if there were no wayside stands. We do not expect to meet groups of grimy happily travelling to some famous spot where the supernatural has blessed the natural. But we are not surprised to see a milling crowd thronging the banks of the Acheron for we have seen them standing in the wierd half light of the Avon. We are not troubled by the fact that conversations among Christians can be carried on without a mention of Christ, as we would be, for instance, if we heard a conversation among newspaper reporters without the mention of the word "news."

And now that civilization seems to be at the end of the road and standing that it is a dead-end, there have been hints that the world does

need something not of the world. Chesterton expresses this in a poem called *Mediaevalism*; in it are these lines:

But now, at your new road's end, you have seen the  
face of a fate,  
All that men took too lightly and all that they love  
too late.

He continues:

It is you that have made no rubric for saints, no  
raiment for lovers,  
Your caps that cry for a feather, your roofs that  
sigh for a spire:  
Is it a dream from the dead if your own decay  
discovers  
Alive in your rotting graveyard the worm of the  
world's desire?

If we do not appreciate fully the symbolic significance of the sight of hell, it is because we have almost too much to do trying to cope with the reality. "Hell's gaping wounds" are all too familiar as the world's gaping wounds. The burnt, scarred, chaotic mass of ruins and lifeless ground is too serious and too common a thing to wonder at when it is simply a picture of hundreds and hundreds of miles of post-war Europe. Perhaps for the medieval man, fire falling from heaven might be a legend of Alexander in far-off India or a reminder of the fire and brimstone that fell on Sodom and Gomorrha. But for the soldiers or civilians who were strafed by enemy planes in the recent war if fire can fall from heaven. Ask anyone in the modern world if the atomic bomb hanging over his head if such a thing is possible.

And the dehumanization of man might well be symbolized by men with the shape of trees but we have men who spend hours a day in the fruitless, sub-human shape of a tool or machine, twirling a screw or turning a screw in mechanical fashion. They have to; if they do as well as the rest of the machine, they are fired. Nature, it is never turns against man until man turns against nature. But man

The symbols of sin which Dante chose to express the real reality of sin seem more than symbolic; they seem almost prophetic. But we are so busy trying to cope with the reality, so feverishly trying to find some secure protection against it, that we have no time to search for its significance. Yet it is most imperative that we do search and find the significance of these "signs of the times." If a certain type of man consistently bursts into flame and falls apart in mid-air, men are intelligent enough to know that there is something more than the reality of the breaking and the burning: there is its significance. Something fundamentally wrong with the plane. Now the world has burst a



d broken into flames twice in one generation and seems on the point doing so a third time. And yet how few have listened to the words Pope Pius XI and his Encyclical *Ubi Arcano Dei*, which he wrote shortly after World War I, where he sought the significance of such a catastrophe and declared that it signified sin. Even Our Lady came down to Fatima to tell the world this truth!

All this is why the symbols of sin depicted so vividly by Dante in the torments of the Inferno have a deep meaning for our day. They might be called *cymbals* of sin, for there in all its crushing, crashing armor sin cries out in symbolic terms. That is why Dante needs no defense for his plan of procedure, but only proper interpretation. Chesterton says somewhere that a cosmic philosophy is made to fit not a man, but a cosmos. So Dante's *Divine Comedy* was made not to fit human but a divine plan, which wasn't meant to end in tragedy. It is great because it is true. It is appealing and it is applicable because it is so true a picture of man in relation to God, or man "meriting or demeriting and so subject in justice to reward or punishment." Hell plays an important part, but still it is only a part and cannot be viewed in the prospective apart from the whole. Hell therefore leaves much to be desired; in a sense, everything. And yet the disgust for sin it engenders, and the hatred for sin it enkindles, is only the way of a genius to set our immortal souls on fire so that "from things visible we may be drawn upward to love of things invisible."

JOHN GLENNON  
Detroit, Michigan

---

## *Future Issues of Integrity Will Be:*

August . . . Poverty and the Bourgeois Spirit

September . . . Spirituality for the Laity

October . . . Politics

---

Subscription rates: \$3.00 a year (12 issues)  
\$3.50 Canada; \$4.00 Foreign

---

INTEGRITY - 1556 York Avenue - New York 28, N. Y.

# Christianity and the Press Don't Mix

Murder . . . rape . . . thievery. These are my stock-in-trade. juicier the murder, the better I like it. The more sadistic the violence of chastity, the greater my rejoicing. The more that scandal attaches to the theft (preferably public funds swiped by a highly-placed official) the more effectively it promotes my aim and purpose—to sell as many newspapers as possible. It is easier on my ulcers, too, than when crime and scandal and general skulduggery are at a low ebb, for then not the blasphemy and vulgarity at which I'm adept will conjure up the headlines of front page for which my readers grab.

Such is the unadmitted credo on which the press operates, in one of its manifestations. In its opposite phase it disdains the obvious sensational crimes in preference for the more "classical" episodes of the human drama—the kid-gloved hatreds behind the struggle for the White House, the international seductions, the relentless feud between capital and labor, the mumbo-jumbo of financial wizards, plus much fancy over science and art and literature as a sort of off-stage chorus.

The press pays lip service to the hope for a better world but actually, those who have invested time and talent or (especially) money in the journalistic racket would be flabbergasted if they saw any immediate likelihood of our getting the kind of world described by Rebecca West: ". . . a world in which each man respected the rights of all other men, no matter how little they seemed to merit respect. It would be a crimeless world."

A crimeless world! What on earth would we newspaper men do then, poor things?

The foregoing is said more in self-condemnation than as blame to the hand that's fed me, because for far too long I have been an accomplice before, during and after the crime of adding to the pollution of the public's mind, under the constitutional protection given freedom of the press. Nevertheless, I see no dishonor in reiterating an obvious truth: that the secular press and Christianity do not mix. What is more, they can never mix unless the press has a change of heart, which can happen only if those who wish that things were different stop making armchair savory witches' brew out of printer's ink or dispense with the alibi "I only work here."

In the beginning I was proud to be a newspaper man. It tickled my vanity to be on familiar terms with the local bigwigs. It seemed important to be busily in the forefront at public events, trying to appear nonchalant and feeling superior.

I took pride in my column of half-baked philosophy. I puffed-up when I broke a story, indifferent as to whom it shamed.

From the start I was sufficiently broad-minded to take in stride theicism, obscenity and pugnacity of the city room. That was all part the "romance of journalism." Such bohemianism! Such intellectual freedom!

With such a heady introduction to the facts of life, I took for granted the man-aping women reporters who were too case-hardened to look for any sign of chivalry and some of whom could hold their own with the best when it came to batting around dirty stories.

I took my turn to look at any sexy picture that was passed around before it was served up on the front page as the American Family's breakfast appetizer. Sometimes I wrote what I thought was a cleverly appropriate caption to do my bit at rubbing the American Woman's nose in the dirt, under the pretense of "glorifying" her.

I joined in the laughter incited by the farce of political chicanery underwritten by my paper, in conjunction with high-sounding editorials on Americanism.

I shared in the smug, condescending attitude toward the church—ge—a necessary concession to church-going readers though just another "damned headache" to the staff.

That's how it was. That's how it is—only more so now, if anything. We're a great lot; so wise in our generation. We can't be fooled. We know that all politicians are crooks, all cops are morons, and whoever the man in the White House he is probably both. We know that business men are Fascists, labor men are goons and racketeers, the clergy is made up of hypocrites, and women are in either one of two classifications, both unmentionable. We know that we know more than all others about everything. We have faith in our own abilities, we hope that each day will provide its full quota of tragedies and disasters, and charity for our distortion of events. We know that what may look like superficiality is really our honest admission that life stinks and that the only way to get ahead is to stink with it. Only a phony would doubt that we have the qualifications proper to those who preside over the channels of public information. Our cult of objectivism is essential to leave us so untouched by life that we can, without fear or favor, give it with the latest dope and care nothing for the effect of our deluge of words—provided it is not a libel suit. If anyone thinks that it may be the infertility of our jaded, formula-ridden minds that sends us raving from one "hot" news story to another—why, they're batty!

The "romance of journalism" first turned sour for me when chasing fire engines lost its kick and drudgery set in. This aroused the painful feeling, born of pride, that someone was prostituting my talents.



But I stuck with it, remained a member of the frenetic tribe during and administering abuse, as the case might be; grounded in habit of quick contempt and occasionally knowing self-disgust. happy family—when the firewater thawed the ice in our veins.

I stuck with it as a means to an end. For privately I was dedicated to a search, with an ardor that I would have termed comparable (I thought of it) to Sir Galahad's ardor in search of the Holy Grail. But it wasn't the Grail I was seeking—it was the revelation which I felt espoused to bring to pass by means of writing "the great American novel," or the biggest hit on Broadway. If that meant champagne bows from the head waiter at *the* spots, where people would whisper awed tones, "You've read his latest, of course."—well, I'd take that.

I'm still stuck with it. It's not easy to be *in* Bedlam but not *of* it. It's not easy to do what the Church is asking: that we be Catholic in fact as well as in name, at work as well as at Mass. But you can't touch the question. It means that I must rid myself of pride, in an environment of pride rampant. Also, it means. . .

I shall no more "hope the bum dies" for the sake of a good story. I shall not write "sob" stories with my tongue in my cheek. I shall not "soft pedal" for the big advertiser and gave the lowly the "works." I shall not assume that slick writing and honest writing are synonymous. I shall not crack the whip and shriek imprecations over an underling in error and, a moment later, weep for the brutalities of a distant tyrant.

I shall keep my mind clean as the dirty jokes rain thick and fast. I shall give a full day's work for a full day's pay, and more than the stated quota of work if needs be. I shall refuse any assignment which violates any one of the Ten Commandments (and there's the rub: such violations are multitudinous and usually cloaked). I shall not flinch in scathing in self-defense when the stand I take brings down upon my head the charge of being a stuffed shirt, hypocrite or, most of all, a degradation, the indictment that I am "not a newspaper man" (usually accompanied by the suggestion that you should have been a preacher).

I shall not hesitate to puncture the illusion that newspapermen are in a class by themselves but shall contend when necessary that we are ordinary and in many cases markedly shallow men are behind the imposing facade of this business enterprise that thrives on the worst dilemmas. I shall scorn the lame excuse that "we don't make the money, we only publish it," and shall weigh each story or headline as its possible inducement to violence, depravity, greed, hatred or despair.

By all means I must avoid any holier-than-thou condemnation of my colleagues who do not yet "see" that up to now each of us has lived like a dark desert through which the spirit of pride and greed and hate have raged like lost souls from Dante's inferno.

If such conduct does not drive the city room satrap to find a way firing me it will be a miracle.

Obviously, it is a man-sized job to carry over into the world's red-blooded commerce the principles and precepts of the Church and the example of Christ. For the Catholic newspaper man or woman it is not a matter of undertaking a quixotic campaign to cast out the demons that plague the secular press. It is something more humble and more difficult: a daily dedication to personal example, minus the soapbox and with a sympathetic grasp of the reasons why the "ladies" and "gentlemen" of the press act and sound like frustrated Zombies.

Many have tried the direct attack. For example: Upton Sinclair (*The Brass Check*), George Seldes (*Lords of the Press*), *PM's* Max Lerner, the *New Yorker's* A. J. Liebling, radio's Don Hollenbeck, and a group of young journalists who, armed with their Newman Foundation fellowships, recently brought a probing indictment against the press. Such efforts meet with doubtful success, so far as effecting any fundamental or last reform. Through the years it has simply become better business to be a trifle more subtle about abuses of privilege, whether in business, industry or politics. An industry which seeks to appeal to the whole gamut of light reading tastes for the price of a nickel (fifteen cents on Sunday with all the stops out) has proved itself expert at being right in so many minor ways that its major wrongs escape general notice. Furthermore, such critics of the press as the aforementioned restrict their aim to a code of ethics plane (not unlike a service club slogan, "He Profits Most Who Serves the Best," which could mean anything) and remain dumb about the uncomplicated fact that the Church would have us remember—the dependence of all things on man on God.

In general, criticism of the press has emphasized these factors:

The "strictly business" mentality of the "big press," with its concentrated power (more than half of the newspaper circulation in the United States controlled by chains).

Publishers' timidity in the face of powerful pressure groups.

Blindness to social needs and to the news that is really vital to a democracy and the cultural development of a people.

#### Distortion of news.

The above are valid causes for complaint, but they are not the *ex* of this article; if they were, much more extensive treatment would be required and an estimate would have to be made of the public service element—advertising of jobs and commodities, information on science and education, advice on gardening and home-making, support of charity campaigns, weather warnings.

We would also have to consider the contributions to social advancement, exposes of injustice and occasional samples of inspired writing which have occurred to the credit of individual newspaper men and women—a recent example of which was offered by Bert Andrews, head of the *New York Herald Tribune's* Washington bureau, with his exposure of State Department methods of dismissing employees for security reasons, without letting them know the charges, brought about a reform in the department's method and won for Andrews the 1941 Heywood Brown Memorial Award given annually by the American Newspaper Guild. Nor could we overlook the cases of courage and devotion to duty, as highlighted by Ernie Pyle's death on Ie Shou, which would bring us to the counter-activities of the porch-climbers, keyhole-snoopers and high-priced venom merchants. But at this writing we are concerned with newspaper men and women as a whole, particularly with what the Catholics among them are up against when they try to *be* Catholics and live in the Christian spirit while on the job.

As for the Newspaper Guild, there was a time when I believed it would roll away the stone from the tomb where early purposes and ideals are so often buried. Why not? Here was a New Deal-inspired labor organization which, in its charter, pledged itself to the aim of "constant honesty in the dissemination of public intelligence" (although it coupled that avowal with a *carte blanche* for the public to decide what news should be published and what withheld, another example of squirming out of moral responsibility). True enough, the Guild has improved working conditions, but material objectives seem to be all that is left of the original promise. The idealism which once impelled us to dare the wrath and endure the reprisals of reactionary employers, or sustained us on the picket line, or bolstered our insistence on getting both sides to a political issue (whether the boss liked it or not)—all of this has been pretty much beclouded by the bane of factionalism within the Guild and the tendency to self-interest. I am still *for* the Guild in principle, but now I know that it is not *the* solution.

The needed solution is one that does far more than guarantee reporter time-and-a-half pay for overtime, a yearly paid-vacation and job separation recompense. There is a need to eliminate the city room's charnal house odor, which becomes especially pungent when the knife is being sharpened for some oldtimer who has slowed up and become half-blind, while the young hopefuls are stunned anew each day by forcing their God-given minds into the mold of Mr. Big's own mental limitations. There is desperate need to halt the sacrifice of character and talents under the whiplash of egotistical *gauleiters* in behalf of a money-blinded industry, a wastage of human material for which the Pulitzer Prize can make amends.



Personally, I see little hope of our getting a truly civilized and responsible press until those who own it and most of those it now thralls are rid of the sense of futility which causes them to operate on the concept that wars and crimes will always be with us and, therefore, the only realistic and sensible attitude is to accept the situation and profit from it if possible. You can be sure that if another world conflagration started and you urged almost any editor to pause long enough to get down on his knees and pray, before continuing his hysterical efforts to be first on the street with a headline screaming *Atom War Declared*, his death by apoplexy would be more imminent than death under his own bomb-melted printing presses as, from the depth of his worldly wisdom, he bellowed: "What, are you nuts?"

Recently I heard a publisher berate a cub reporter who had missed a story. With much shrieking, desk-pounding and insulting allusions to the youngster's mentality, his "superior" informed him: "I don't know how you get a story, just so long as you get it. If you're a real reporter you'll get the story even if it means breaking and entry, lying, blackmail or mayhem. *And I want reporters, or else. . .*"

That was the straw that broke the back of my qualms about writing this article. Right then and there I decided that if any young Catholic told me what I thought about his or her going in for journalism, making solely of the secular press, I would say: Unless you have the length of faith and purpose to be a Daniel in the lion's den it would be better to serve society as a street cleaner on a coffee-and-doughnuts economy, than to worm your way into the "higher" strata, searching for a golden *apple of despair*. For although the newspaper game could be a worthy and soul-satisfying vocation, if men of the highest caliber are at the helm, certainly it is not that now. It has nothing to offer (not even the "take" of a syndicated name writer) that is worth the risk of losing one's wholeness as a man or woman to add one's name to the long list of those who are rapidly approaching eligibility for the schizophrenia ward.

WALTON WILLIAMS

## BOOK REVIEWS

### Doctors and Patients

**BODIES AND SOULS**  
by Maxence van der Meersch  
Allegrini and Cudahy, \$3.75

This is a long novel about the medical profession. It was very popular in France where it appeared in two volumes, now under one cover in translation. Van der Meersch is a magnificent realistic writer

with a profound spiritual understanding. *Bodies and Souls* is not ostensibly Catholic novel, but is based on a theme from Saint Augustine and has a spiritual orientation.

The setting of the book is a great European hospital, whose faculty, their families furnish the chief characters. Experiments in shock treatment, researches in T.B., autopsies, ward visits, laboratory experiments, and the philosophical concepts of medical theory, are the background against which stories of men's souls are written. The medical background is minutely detailed and precisely accurate (a medical opinion, not mine).

There are a half-dozen or so major characters and many minor ones, whose stories form the interweaving plot of this book. The novel is a brilliant penetrating analysis of souls, a fact quite missed by secular reviewers, one of whom complained of the "defect" of a pervasive moral attitude. The author shows, magnificently, the subtle and deadly temptations to vainglory and vanity which stalk the greatest of the doctors. There are also several poignant stories, in which the children of the medical faculty are involved. But whether the character is being tried in his profession or in his domestic life, it is the same soul's struggle in either case. Some of the stories end tragically, some happily, but it is always a matter of spiritual defect or spiritual triumph. The Van der Meersch reveals his own greatness of soul. Success to him is not wealth, fame, or even humanitarian greatness, but ultimately the love of God, and his thesis is that all loves are reducible in the end (and indeed reduce themselves) to love of God or love of self. "Two loves have built two cities: the love that despises God, the earthly city; the love of God that despises the earthly city."

Michel Doutreval, the idealistic young doctor in the story, abandons a brilliant career to marry a tubercular for whom he has pity. A cheap novelist would have his story there, to the playing of "Hearts and Flowers." A mediocre novelist might have Michel turn to his poor patients for peace and fulfillment. Van der Meersch shows Michel's love disappear, the fervor of his sacrifice grow cold, the poverty and ugliness become oppressive, the temptation to escape born. But Michel stays with his wife and gradually, when looking at her, begins to see another Face shine through. Of this love of God, then, is born a new and deeper love for his wife and his work.

The love story of Michel's sister, Fabienne, even more clearly illustrates the same spiritual truth, that natural love can be preserved and purified only by lifting it to God, to the sacrifice of self. Van der Meersch is a true realist, even goes so far as to portray the life of the soul as it is.

CAROL JACKSON

#### THE SCHOOL OF THE LORD'S SERVICE

By Rev. Bernard A. Sause, O.S.B.  
Grail Press, St. Meinrad, Indiana, \$4.00

The immediate purpose of the Rule of Saint Benedict as stated by the Rule in the prologue to the rule is "to found a school of the Lord's service." Bernard A. Sause in his work on the Benedictine Rule has divided the complete doctrine of the Benedictine Rule into twelve leading ideals of Saint Benedict and has provided a year's course consisting of a meditation, particular examen and practical application for each day of the year. Volume I for the first four months covers the ideals of vocational humility and charity to God and neighbors and includes the translation of

of the Holy Rule which is keyed for reference for the daily spiritual  
cises.

*The School of the Lord's Service* is written primarily for religious but those  
ates of Saint Benedict who are striving to maintain Christian homes will  
much in its pages to root their family community in Christ.

RUTH DOLAN

#### BOOK ABOUT GOD

Julie Bedier and Louise Trevisan  
McMillan, \$2.00 (Ages 4-6)

For years Catholic parents have  
been plagued by the problem of find-  
ing attractive Catholic religious books  
for their children. The really lovely  
books, with the most beautiful illus-  
trations usually turned out to be Protestant, or even worse, ethical-culturish in  
content. It was to remedy this situation that two Maryknoll Sisters (the author  
and artist of this work) set up a project to furnish good Catholic books, color-  
fully illustrated, for children. This is the first fruit of their efforts and it is  
vivid, beautifully produced in beautiful colors. It is about how we are all  
children of God, rich and poor, black and white and yellow, young and old;  
and loves us all and we must love each other.

CAROL JACKSON

### Guide to the Apostolate

#### SOULS AT STAKE

Francis J. Ripley and F. S. Mitchell  
Hagener, \$2.50

The Legion of Mary operates so  
quietly that few people realize how  
dynamic a modern apostolic move-  
ment it is. This book will be a  
revelation to them, especially since  
much of the material appeared in the Legion magazine years ago, at a time  
when American Catholics were still appointing committees, writing letters to  
Congressmen, and organizing baseball teams, under the name of Catholic Action.  
These Legion people were discussing real problems and working out effective  
techniques. They saw that the problem was secularism and that no naturalistic  
method would be effective. Many a so-called radical would gulp a couple of  
pages before exercising as wholehearted a dependence on the help of grace as  
the authors take for granted.

Are you too poor to marry? How poor is too poor? The standard given  
is relative to God's designs for the human race rather than relative to an  
arbitrary standard of living. Are you afraid to approach people directly? Say  
prayer to Mary.

What qualifications are necessary for a lay apostle? That they be instru-  
ments of divine grace. Just as God chooses odd instruments (from our point  
of view) so does the Legion welcome willing workers without respect to age,  
education, intellectual attainments or worldly prestige—and they are effective apostles.  
Why don't we see miracles today? Because our faith has grown cold. If we  
live our supernatural life then miracles will follow, and be very useful to  
the apostolate.

Despite an obvious effort to be fair and charitable toward the Young Chris-  
tian Workers' movement, the authors can't help in the end showing a slight dis-



dain for the Jocist movement which uses natural leadership and aims at institutional as well as personal reform. There really ought to be no antagonism between the two movements. Jocism has (to my mind) a more comprehensive vision of the social apostolate, the Legion of Mary is needed for the more humble and humble apostolate. Both work toward a supernatural end and lean heavily on grace, and both are intensely realistic.

ADELE MARTIN

## There'll Always Be An England

### THE END

By Hugh Venning

Desmond & Stapleton, Buffalo, N. Y., \$3.00

Mr. Venning's first novel is a projection not a prophecy, a fantasy on the end of the world. The year is 2045, significant in that Great Britain

celebrating a century of uninterrupted peace. By this time life in England is sweet and ordered. English tradition and institutions not only have been preserved but have reached full flowering. Liberal democracy has reached its highest peak and there seems to be no reason to doubt that the Century of Faith has been accomplished, at least in England. Other countries are not so fortunate. Only three countries along with England are free from the domination of a dynamically evil dictatorship. But these three countries, Poland, Eire, and French Canada, are the only territories which are laboring under the difficulties of a principled but unyielding Faith.

Catholicism has been voted out of existence in England, Catholic property confiscated (but more than amply paid for out of state funds) and the Catholics transported to the Catholic countries still extant. Similarly, the United States had voted against Catholicism in favor of the Boston Allover Uplift.

The new dictator is 666, the founder of the Greater Roman Empire, who is in fact Anti-Christ. His headquarters is in Rome, the Pope having been exiled to Warsaw in 1951. The dictator delivers an ultimatum to the remaining Catholic countries to surrender to his rule or suffer extinction. Pomfret (pronounced Pomfrey), the Prime Minister of Great Britain, is asked to put the weight of English prestige behind the request. This vexes the Prime Minister greatly. To comply with the request of 666 would mean that England would be while her friends (or at least some rather decent if quaint people) would suffer their deaths. To resist meant that England would suffer a similar fate. The dilemma is resolved in a bit of ridiculous but hilarious "muddling through."

This book immediately recalls to the reader Monsignor Hugh Beaumont's *Lord of the World*, brought up to date and even improved on. You'll enjoy it very much.

JOHN MURPHY



## TO A WORLD IN CHAOS

WE RECOMMEND

### *The Living Beauty of The Church*

(Shows the Spirit and the Power to transform the world.)

The Church is seen in miniature in the living parish.

We have published a magazine about it for eight years. Both religious and laymen have been with us in a loving study of this Divine Society in which all are called to holiness. Appearance is with the Seasons of the Church.

The writers are laymen, situated in Holy Cross Parish, Saint Louis, Missouri. Monsignor Martin E. Hellriegel is pastor. For one dollar you will receive THE LIVING PARISH for one year. Send it and a request for a free survey of other publications to

PIO DECIMO PRESS  
BOX 53, BADEN STATION  
SAINT LOUIS 15, MISSOURI





STS. DIAMOND AND GRIDIRON